

GENERAL J. M. SCHOFIELD. HIS REMINISCENCES OF HIS LONG CAREER AS A SOLDIER.

FOURTY-SIX YEARS IN THE ARMY. By Lieutenant General John M. Schofield. Octavo pp. xxv. 57. The Century Company.

General Schofield's autobiography is a good example of what a narrative written by a soldier ought to be. It is cool and self-contained, and it is devoid of any apparent purpose aside from the record itself. The model for such works is the memoirs of Caesar on his campaigns. But Caesar had his eyes on the politics of his time. Napoleon's personal reminiscences have always been in question as to their perspective. There was certainly something morbid in his logic at times. Apparently a tinge of this is also to be found in the writings of General Sherman. The utter simplicity of Grant's nature makes his military narrative one of the most effective in the whole range of literature. General Schofield shares Grant's candor, and his logical consistency. Neither of the two looks back for new arguments about conclusions that were settled by events. This quality is not one to be gained by deliberation and thought. If a man is to be observed that the man of complex nature, whose thoughts waver, may be as safe in his conclusions as the simpler man whose methods are direct. General Schofield puts a psychological study in a line or two, alluding to Sherman's march through Georgia, when he says: "Sherman's plan was so firmly fixed in his own mind, almost from the very start, that he was determined to adhere to it in spite of all possible opposition, even including the adverse opinions and advice of General Grant. Hence, as was his habit in such cases, he invented every imaginable reason, without regard to their logical or illogical character, to convince others of the soundness of his conclusion. But the basic point is that the relations of Johnston's army to the victor's were different from those of Lee's army. Johnston was not surrounded, and his soldiers, who by this time had become familiar with almost every by-path and lurking place in the South, if they were disaffected, could scatter and prolong the war indefinitely as guerrillas. This contingency was so threatening that General Schofield says it was years after the war was over before his dreams at night ignored the subject. 'I was often,' he remarks, 'haunted in my dreams with the difficulties I was actually encountering in the prosecution of military operations against those remnants of the Confederate armies, in marshy and mountainous country through summer heats and winter storms.' After the miseries of reconstruction General Schofield was sent to France to convince Louis Napoleon that the French must get out of Mexico. Later he had experience as Secretary of War and as General of the Army. If the General of the Army really commands at the present day, he owes something to General Schofield's agitation against an abuse, the most salient absurdity of which was the sight of his own orders in print before they had been submitted to him for his approval and signature. In forty-six years he witnessed many different phases of the military service, but it is probable that in the light of current events his mind now goes back to his earliest service as a subaltern on the fever-stricken coasts of Florida. He can explain how he saved his small force from the yellow fever, and that will be a pertinent lesson if war has to be waged in Cuba and in the West Indian seas.

Throughout this period Schofield's name is inextricably linked with Hood's as that of the man who understood him and how to defeat him. Once in their cedar days, Schofield had persuaded Hood to finish his studies. When he observed how hard a fighter his old classmate was, he rather regretted this but, after all, Hood was more useful to his opponents than the strategist Johnston would have been. He made quick work of the dying Confederacy. Against this impetuous commander who took every risk, fate placed General Schofield, whose ideal of military genius is that which leaves nothing to chance. Few campaigns have been more bitterly fought over after they became history than the one which these two old friends shared as antagonists. Hood and his subordinates quarreled about the responsibility for the Confederate repulse at Spring Hill, while the controversy among Union officers over the battle of Franklin has vanished examples of almost every kind of military pell-mell. The campaign was the culmination of General Schofield's career in the Civil War, and his study of it, perhaps, the most interesting part of his book. He leaves Sherman making ready for the march from Atlanta to the sea; not, however, without showing what he considers the defects in Sherman's plan and in its execution. The main defect, so far as this science of war was concerned, was that the real objective of the Atlanta campaign had been missed. Popular notions had infected military practice, so that the capture of great towns which were really a burden to the victor was never thought of than the defeat of armies. If the United States ever have another civil war, it will probably be marked by few such crises as "On to Richmond!" General Schofield argues that Hood's army was the real objective of the Atlanta campaign and that Sherman was scientifically wrong in letting that army slip, since he knew that it would have to be defeated by somebody. But Sherman was right in his theory that Hood could be defeated without the help of the great army which he led to Savannah. So he left the intricacies of the struggle behind him to Thomas and Schofield. Thomas had no arms aside from garrisons. Schofield had two corps. His strategy was necessarily confined to delaying Hood's movements from day to day until Thomas could gather troops at Nashville for a final struggle.

The time was late November. Days were short, nights were long, and the weather uncertain. There was more time for thinking than there was for marching. General Schofield intimates that Hood might have done well to be awake and thinking sometimes when he slept. But Hood fell secure on some points where his antagonist was in doubt. He could get full information from the people as to the Union forces, while General Schofield had to depend wholly on his own scouts and spies and the cavalry. Hood's facilities in this regard misled him. He fancied that his movements were in part unobserved, whereas his opponent was staying awake nights to watch him. Meanwhile Thomas was urgently commanding Schofield to impede the enemy as much as possible, while the latter's appeals for troops and pontoons were unavailing. But things were not so bad as they looked. General Schofield being foremost in the race northward could choose the best roads, and Hood was obliged to lead his men through the mud. Schofield could march at night. This Hood could not do unless he fell in behind on the turnpike. Thus the latter was at a disadvantage in spite of his numbers, and was never able to strike a blow with his whole force before the battlefield of Franklin was reached. He overestimated the marching power of his men, and yet in the end he caught his opponent at a disadvantage which he was quick to discover. The small Union army, with a river behind it, was ruined if defeated. It would have preferred to fight on better ground. But the effort to be ready for a battle at any moment had put every soldier on the alert, and General Schofield prides himself on the certainty with which troops in reserve, knowing their place in the line broken by the impetuous rebel charge, practically destroyed the vanguard of a moment. The battle was a matter of minutes only, and yet the losses in Hood's army were reckoned by thousands. The Confederates drew off beaten but not discouraged. General Schofield insists that any other troops would have given up in despair. But Hood's men had had their most great battle in them, the two days' fight before Nashville.

General Schofield's personal claim as to the battle of Franklin, with its necessary preliminaries, is that, as against any other commander, the affair was entirely his own. He shows that communications were such that this could not be otherwise. His criticism of Thomas is that the latter should have left Nashville and taken command, or, failing that, should have sent reinforcements and above all, pontoons for a bridge at Franklin. It was the lack of a bridge which left him in a position where defeat would have been utter ruin. While he does not subscribe to the intentional hypoderme of Sherman that the battle of Nashville was fought at Franklin, he holds that the repulse by his troops made the later defeat of Hood a certainty. He argues from the records that the second day's battle at Nashville was a soldier's fight without orders from the commander, and that Thomas misunderstood Hood's character. Thomas's final mistake, in his view, was in failing to pursue Hood until he rendered impossible the reorganization of the beaten and demoralized rebel army. As it was, that army had spirit enough to march to the seaboard State and withstand Sherman until after Lee's surrender. But General Schofield denies in detail the assertions that he had any thought in the Nashville campaign of superseding Thomas. Around this suspicion, cherished mainly by Thomas's friends in the Army of the Cumberland, has gathered much of the bitterness of rivalry in the official groups of the Western armies. Something of Schofield's patience and coolness as a general was shown in the way he waited for this suspicion to take definite form as an accusation before he made to take refuge from it. On his side he now charges that certain important documents have disappeared, and that portions of Thomas's official reports, in which he was treated with scant courtesy, were written by another hand or inspired by other minds. After the war he refused the Division of the Pacific, thinking that it was due to Thomas. In doing this he was requiring a bit of severity

which he was not aware of at the time. General Schofield admits that he was somewhat undutiful as a cadet, and that his demeanor ran uncomfortably near the danger point at times. Once he was dismissed from the Military Academy, and only recovered his position with the aid of Senator Stephen A. Douglas. When Secretary of War, General Schofield looked over the record of this incident and found that only two members of the investigating court had stood out for his dismissal. One of these was General Thomas. The other was General Fitz John Porter, and General Schofield revenged himself in that case by helping to reverse the finding of the famous court-martial by which Porter was disgraced. He seems to take as much pleasure in these two "revenges" as his experiences of war. In connection with this, it is worth mentioning that General Schofield reveres the Bible, and that, in addition to being a soldier, he is also the son of a minister. These facts are contributions to the theory of heredity.

Through General Schofield asked and obtained for himself and his command a speedy transfer to the East after the battle of Nashville, he was not done with Hood's army. That army had made its way east, and, under command of General Johnston, was doing what it could to obstruct the northward march of Sherman. When the time came for surrender, as is familiarly known, it was not the capitulation first accepted by Sherman, but the "military convention" written by General Schofield which was finally agreed upon. General Schofield points out that the relations of Johnston's army to the victor's were different from those of Lee's army. Johnston was not surrounded, and his soldiers, who by this time had become familiar with almost every by-path and lurking place in the South, if they were disaffected, could scatter and prolong the war indefinitely as guerrillas. This contingency was so threatening that General Schofield says it was years after the war was over before his dreams at night ignored the subject. "I was often," he remarks, "haunted in my dreams with the difficulties I was actually encountering in the prosecution of military operations against those remnants of the Confederate armies, in marshy and mountainous country through summer heats and winter storms." After the miseries of reconstruction General Schofield was sent to France to convince Louis Napoleon that the French must get out of Mexico. Later he had experience as Secretary of War and as General of the Army. If the General of the Army really commands at the present day, he owes something to General Schofield's agitation against an abuse, the most salient absurdity of which was the sight of his own orders in print before they had been submitted to him for his approval and signature. In forty-six years he witnessed many different phases of the military service, but it is probable that in the light of current events his mind now goes back to his earliest service as a subaltern on the fever-stricken coasts of Florida. He can explain how he saved his small force from the yellow fever, and that will be a pertinent lesson if war has to be waged in Cuba and the West Indian seas.

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